



# Rhode Island Rivers Council

c/o RI Water Resources Board  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908  
[www.ririvers.org](http://www.ririvers.org)



Minutes of the November 13, 2013, Public Hearing  
on the Re-designation of Two Local Watershed Councils  
Minutes of November 13, 2013, Meeting of the RI Rivers Council  
Conference Room B  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, Rhode Island

## ATTENDANCE:

### A. Members Present

Veronica Berounsky (Chair)  
Rachel Calabro (Vice Chair)  
James Cole  
Walt Galloway  
Paul Gonsalves  
Judith Hadley  
Chuck Horbert  
Guy Lefebvre  
Lisa McGreavy  
Elise Torello

### B. Guests in Attendance

Alice Clemente, Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone (BRWC/FOB)  
Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA)

## 1. Public Hearing on the Re-designation of Local Watershed Councils

Ms. Calabro opened the public hearing at 4:10pm and noted that the public hearing was advertised on the Secretary of State Website on October 11 and November 8, 2013.

## 2. Overview of Responsibility and Process

Ms. Calabro stated that two watershed councils are candidates for re-designation to be state recognized local watershed councils for a five year period: the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone and the Narrow River Preservation Association. Section 46-28-8 of the RI General Laws highlights two specific elements that accompany the designation by the RIRC. First, the designation gives legal standing to watershed councils for their appearances on behalf of their watersheds before local and state public bodies. The RIRC developed and adopted, in cooperation with the state, a notice rule providing for watershed councils to request and receive notification of actions being requested or taken within their watersheds. Second, the designation makes watershed councils eligible for annual grants from funds allocated by the General Assembly to the RIRC.

## 3. Acceptance of Comments by Re-designation Applications

Ms. Calabro invited comments from the public and representatives of the applicants. Ms. Clemente of the BRWC/FOB summarized the many recent accomplishments of the BRWC/FOB which is a testament to the many talents, hard work and dedication of council board members and other volunteers. Richard Grant of the NRPA expressed appreciation for the support RIRC provides and highlighted recent

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accomplishments of the NRPA. W. Galloway thanked the NRPA for sponsoring the summer RIRC meeting at the URI Bay Campus.

#### **4. Closure of Public Hearing**

There being no further public comment, Ms. Calabro closed the public hearing at 4:40 pm.

### **Rhode Island Rivers Council Monthly Meeting**

#### **1. Call to Order**

Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:40 pm, noted that a quorum was present, and asked Ms. Calabro to lead the meeting as Vice Chair since Dr. Berounsky is associated with one of the watershed councils applying for re-designation.

#### **2. Consideration of Re-designations of Local Watershed Councils**

Ms. Calabro summarized the re-designation process which included the formation of a subcommittee comprised of herself, Mr. Lefebvre and Ms. McGreavy who met to review the two requests and make a recommendation to the full RIRC. Ms. Calabro noted that both councils submitted complete and well prepared request packages and moved to approve the re-designation applications for the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone and the Narrow River Preservation Association for a five year term. Mr. Lefebvre seconded the motion. Discussion on the motion included supporting statements by Ms. Hadley, Mr. Galloway, Mr. Lefebvre, and Mr. Horbert. All voted in favor of the re-designations with abstentions by Dr. Berounsky on the NRPA vote and by Ms. Hadley on the BRWC/FOB vote.

#### **3. Allocation of Funds from FY14 Budget for Grants and Operating Expenses**

The Rivers Council received \$15,150 from the FY14 state budget, and requested grant applications for up to \$2,250 from designated watershed councils. All nine designated watershed councils submitted grant requests this year totaling \$17,450. A subcommittee comprised of Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Calabro and Ms. McGreavy met to review the applications and presented the full council with a summary of the applications received and recommended grant amounts. It was noted that there were two proposals requiring additional information. The Kickemuit River Council provided a sketch and description of the proposed fish ladder model. The Pawtuxet River Authority was asked to provide additional information that has not been received to date including location of the proposed guardrail to be replaced, photos, whether any town or state permits/authorization would be required for the proposed work, and information on property ownership/authorization. The summary sheet recommended the following allocation of the grant funds which were moved by Ms. Calabro and voted upon as indicated below:

- Buckeye Brook Coalition – requested \$700, RIRC recommended \$700 for *Knowles (Parsonage) Brook Monitoring w/URI Watershed Watch*. Seconded by Mr. Horbert; all voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone requested \$2,250, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for the *Fish in the Classroom project*. Seconded by Ms. Torello; Ms. Hadley abstained, all remaining members voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Friends of the Moshassuck – requested \$1,000, RIRC recommended \$1,000 for *Collyer Field Restoration/Wildlife in the North Burying Ground*. Seconded by Mr. Gonsalves; Ms. Hadley abstained, all remaining members voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Kickemuit River Council – requested \$2,250, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for the *Working Model of the Denil Fish Ladder project*. Seconded by Mr. Horbert; all voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Narrow River Preservation Association – requested \$2,250, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for the *River Watch Results II – Effects of Human Activities and Climate Change*. Seconded by Mr. Lefebvre; Dr. Berounsky abstained, all remaining members voted in favor and the motion passed.

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- Pawtuxet River Authority – requested \$2,300, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for *Improvements to Phenix Harris Riverwalk* **pending receipt of requested information listed above**. Seconded by Ms. McGreavy; all voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Salt Ponds Coalition – requested \$2,200, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for *Water Quality Monitoring of Southern Rhode Island Coastal Lagoons*. Seconded by Mr. Galloway; Ms. Torello abstained; all remaining members voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association – requested \$2,250, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for *Water Quality Monitoring in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed*. Seconded by Ms. Hadley; Mr. Galloway abstained; all remaining members voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – requested \$2,250, RIRC recommended \$1,900 for *Promoting Stewardship through Recreation & Monitoring*. Seconded by Mr. Gonsalves. All voted in favor and the motion passed.
- The remainder of the funds, \$150 to be transferred to the RIRC administrative account via the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council who is the fiscal agent for the RIRC.

Several members noted that all grants were well planned and deserving of funding. Discussion ensued regarding the need for further discussion on future grant RFP's possibly being more issue-directed and competitive.

#### **4. Review and Approval of October 9, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Horbert moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Cole seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. Officer Reports**

Vice Chair Calabro announced that Save the Bay is hosting a stream continuity training workshop on November 16, 2013 to prepare volunteers on how to survey culverts. Contact Ms. Calabro if interested in training and if anyone would like her to conduct training in other locations. Also, there will be a seminar on possibilities for restoring herring runs to the Ten Mile River as well as other work being done on Shad and Salmon at the North Attleboro Fish Hatchery on November 23; further info via email to follow. Ms. Calabro also said the Ten Mile river Watershed Council has a new chair and the organization is interested in becoming a state designated local watershed council by the RIRC.

#### **6. Committee Reports**

**RIRC Website:** Ms. Torello and Mr. Lefebvre announced updates to the website noting that the domain and webhosting contracts were renewed for two years and contact information was corrected. Dr. Berounsky requested that Mr. Lefebvre continue to add historical content to the website and Ms. Torello to link to other council's calendars.

**Reading References:** Mr. Lefebvre highly recommended the following publication: *Imprint of the Past: Ecological History of Greenwich Bay, Rhode Island* by Carol Pesch et al from the Atlantic Ecology Division, US EPA Office of Research & Development, Narragansett, RI, September 2012. He said much of the in-depth long term historical information in this study is generalizable to other areas of the state.

**Signage for Trail Heads & Crossings:** Mr. Cole will be contacting each watershed council for their input on sign locations in their watershed and also contacting the Providence Parks Department for more information in obtaining signs that would be appropriate.

## **7. Other Business:**

**RIRC Representative on the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP):** Mr. Galloway provided an update on NBEP that was reorganized earlier this year noting he will be meeting with new Program Director Tom Borden to introduce him to the RIRC.

**RIRC Representative on the Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Coordinating Team (BRWCT):**

Dr. Berounsky noted that the next meeting of the BRWCT will be on December 11, 2 to 4pm at DOA and therefore just before the RIRC meeting and welcomed members who are interested in attending.

**Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Dr. Berounsky:**

The Nature Conservancy Salt Marsh is addressing erosion concerns using coir logs; however Dr. Boothroyd maintains that a no wake zone is needed. Signage is needed at public access areas where shellfishing is prohibited to inform the public.

**Salt Ponds Coalition as reported by Ms. Torello:**

The Fall/Winter newsletter is being finalized and will be on the website soon. The SPC status and trends report has been drafted and is going well. Ms. Calabro will provide recommendations on printing services. Water quality sampling has completed for the season and data that is expected in February will be checked for quality control, incorporated into the existing spreadsheet, and sampling locations will be georeferenced using Google mapping. The US Department of the Interior (DOI) announced funding availability of \$6 million for non-federal groups proposing habitat resiliency projects. A proposal was approved to dredge Ninigret Pond.

**Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Mr. Galloway:**

Mr. Ken Payne who wrote the original legislation creating the RIRC has agreed to speak at an upcoming RIRC meeting in January or February at the WPGA office. The federal initiative to designate the Wood-Pawcatuck River a Wild and Scenic river is moving forward as the US House of Representatives voted to conduct an investigative study which was also introduced in the US Senate but not yet voted on by the Senate. If the study is approved, WPGA staff will be involved in conducting the study.

**Proposed Hydropower Projects as reported by Mr. Horbert:**

The Natick Dam hydropower project is an interesting project worth following due to the many issues involved including river access, potential impacts to fisheries and dissolved oxygen concerns, FERC issues, and several downstream sewage treatment plants. A freshwater wetlands application has not been submitted to date. Ms. Calabro reported on the field visit that she attended and discussion ensued regarding a proposed eel way and options to maintain oxygen levels in the river.

## **8. Chair's Report**

- Dr. Berounsky noted that she is lining up speakers for upcoming RIRC meetings and gathering information on possible meeting locations; more to follow.
- Upcoming events:
  - Nov. 14 – Bairds Symposium on The future of Shellfish in Rhode Island
  - Nov 20 - URI GSO Presentation by Dr. John King on The Role of GSO and URI in Mitigating the Impacts of Climate Change on Coastal Rhode Island
  - Nov 21 – URI workshop on Rhode Island Regulatory Setbacks and Buffers
  - Nov 25 – URI Beach SAMP meeting

## **9. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Cole moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Horbert. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 pm.